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## THE INTELLIGENCE WAR

# MOSCOW PLAN TO TEST REAGAN

By ROBERT MOSS

**MOSCOW-WATCHERS** at Nato headquarters and on the National Security Council in Washington are agreed that in the coming months the Soviet leadership aims to subject the new American Administration to a series of major challenges designed to test its nerve and resources.

Many of them continue to believe that a Soviet invasion of Poland will present one of the decisive tests.

One senior analyst believes that the Soviet Defence Council resolved to intervene in Poland at a secret meeting last December. But the action was postponed for a number of reasons, including the decision to wait until President Reagan had been formally inaugurated, as well as the desire to avoid creating an international furor before the Soviet party Congress and the French elections and to allow time to develop a psychological warfare programme to divide and discredit the leaders of the Polish workers' movement.

A recent KGB defector, Major Korolyuk, who is being debriefed by the West German intelligence services, the BND and BfV, has provided some important clues to other tests that the Soviet leadership may have in store for Washington.

Korolyuk's cover was as an interpreter with the Soviet delegation to the talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) in Vienna. Since his defection he has claimed that last year the Soviet Politburo resolved to intensify the general offensive against the West in 1981, concentrating on areas that are not covered by the Nato alliance, especially the Gulf and southern and central Africa.

According to the defector the general plan of action is to seek, through covert action, to install pro-Soviet régimes that can appeal (where necessary) for military support in the name of "fraternal socialist aid," thus denying the Nato powers a legal or political pretext for taking effective counter-measures.

The continuing Iraq-Iran war and the political turmoil in Teheran may provide Moscow with a signal opportunity to operate along these lines. The Russians have been playing a complex balancing game throughout the Gulf war, while the Americans, whose hostility towards their former ally, Iran, was intensified by the humiliation of the hostage affair, have recently been inching closer to the radical régime in Iraq.

It is a stronger alignment between Baghdad and Washington were to emerge it could present the Russians with an opportunity for which they have been eagerly waiting.

That development would sabotage the prospect that the Americans can now reopen channels to moderate elements inside Iran, possibly including President Abolhasan Bani-Sadr, locked in a bitter power-struggle with the Islamic revolutionaries, and would help the Russians to increase their influence in Teheran.

The recent declaration by President Saddam Hussein that Iraq will give full support to separatist minorities inside Iran is particularly ominous in this context.

The break-up of Iran (conceivable under conditions of civil war) might assist the emergence of an independent "Republic of Baluchistan" which would lay claim to sections of Pakistan and bring closer the achievement of the long-standing Soviet objective of opening a land route from the borders of Russia to the Indian Ocean.

The Soviet Union, with 25 divisions stationed north of Iran and a military aviation fleet of over 1,800 transport planes is strongly placed to intervene in Iran, and the Russians have established close links with Baluchi leaders like Abdullah Mollazadeh.

Beside the Gulf situation the civil war in El Salvador looks almost like a sideshow.

Few analysts doubt that the Americans can rapidly take the situation in El Salvador in hand and reverse the whole process of encroaching Soviet/Cuban influence in Central America—possibly to the point of bringing down the Marxist regime in Nicaragua which has provided a base for Salvadoran guerrillas.

However, the public controversy over the Reagan Administration's policies in Central America constitutes a formidable test in a different sense. As in the campaign against the deployment of medium-range missiles in Western Europe, the Russians and their front organisations are pulling out all the stops in their efforts to encourage international opposition to Washington's actions, and receive ample assistance from liberals who swallow false analogies between American involvement in El Salvador and the tragedy in Vietnam.

### Gaddafi's next

#### targets

Fresh from his success in almost annexing Chad—a poor but uranium-rich country that has announced its "merger" with Libya—Col. Muammar Gaddafi is now believed to have his sights set on bringing about a revolution in Sudan. In 1976, the Libyan strongman financed an abortive coup attempt in Sudan.

Part of his motivation for again making President Numeiry's régime a target is that Sudan is strategically located at the back door to Egypt and contains the upper reaches of the Nile.

The installation of a Left-wing, pro-Gaddafi régime in Khartoum would be a major step towards the fulfilment of the Libyan leaders' longstanding ambition to be the ouster of Egypt's President Sadat.

Western intelligence sources report that Gaddafi recently increased his financial contributions to the so-called "Sudanese Liberation Front," whose nominal chief is Sharif al-Hindi, a former Finance Minister in Khartoum.

Al-Hindi's political support inside Sudan largely stems from his status as traditional chief of the Khatmia, the second largest Islamic sect in the country.

The sect has a large following in the western desert region of Darfur, bordering on Chad, where Sudanese rebels are now reportedly establishing bases and training camps under Libyan supervision.

The nervousness of the Sudanese government about these new Libyan manoeuvres was increased by the failure of France to pre-empt Gaddafi's land-grab in Chad.

According to senior officials in Paris the French secret service, the SDECE, submitted a report to President Giscard d'Estaing outlining how a modest military operation—mostly involving air strikes—could have destroyed the advancing Libyan column. But Giscard refused to act.

Sudan's President Numeiry is said to have expressed bewilderment and unease about the French non-role in Chad when he received M. Gerard Ibon, the Director of International Relations in the Defence Ministry, in mid-January.

In 1979 France and Sudan concluded a military co-operation agreement, under which the French supply equipment and officer training.

At the same time the Libyans are active on many other African fronts. In pursuit of his goal of creating a revolutionary "Islamic republic" in West Africa, Gaddafi has reportedly initiated the recruitment and training of several hundred nomadic Tuaregs from Mali and Niger for clandestine warfare. He also made a recent donation to the Marxist government of the Seychelles to help it expand its security forces.

### Soviet base in

#### Madagascar?

Nato analysts are disturbed by indications that the Soviet Navy could soon be in a position to command one of the world's most important maritime "choke-up points"—the Mozambique Channel, the waterway between Mozambique and the Malagasy Republic, more familiarly known as Madagascar.

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